MARVEL
PETER PARKER
SPIDER-MAN
#12
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MACKIE
ROMITA JR
HANNA
RETURN OF THE
PART 2 OF 2
SINISTER SIX!
DIRECT EDITION
01211
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AN EARLY FALL MORNING IN NEW YORK CITY.
THE MOST HARDY COMMUTERS TRY TO BEAT THE RUSH AS THEY HEAD FOR THE SUBWAY AND WORK.
A NORMAL DAY IN THE BIG APPLE?
NOT TODAY.
NOT FOR MOST.
23ST STATION
AND CERTAINLY NOT FOR THE PARKER FAMILY.
BRAKOOM
THEN AGAIN... FEW DAYS ARE.
BRAKOOM
WHAT THE?!

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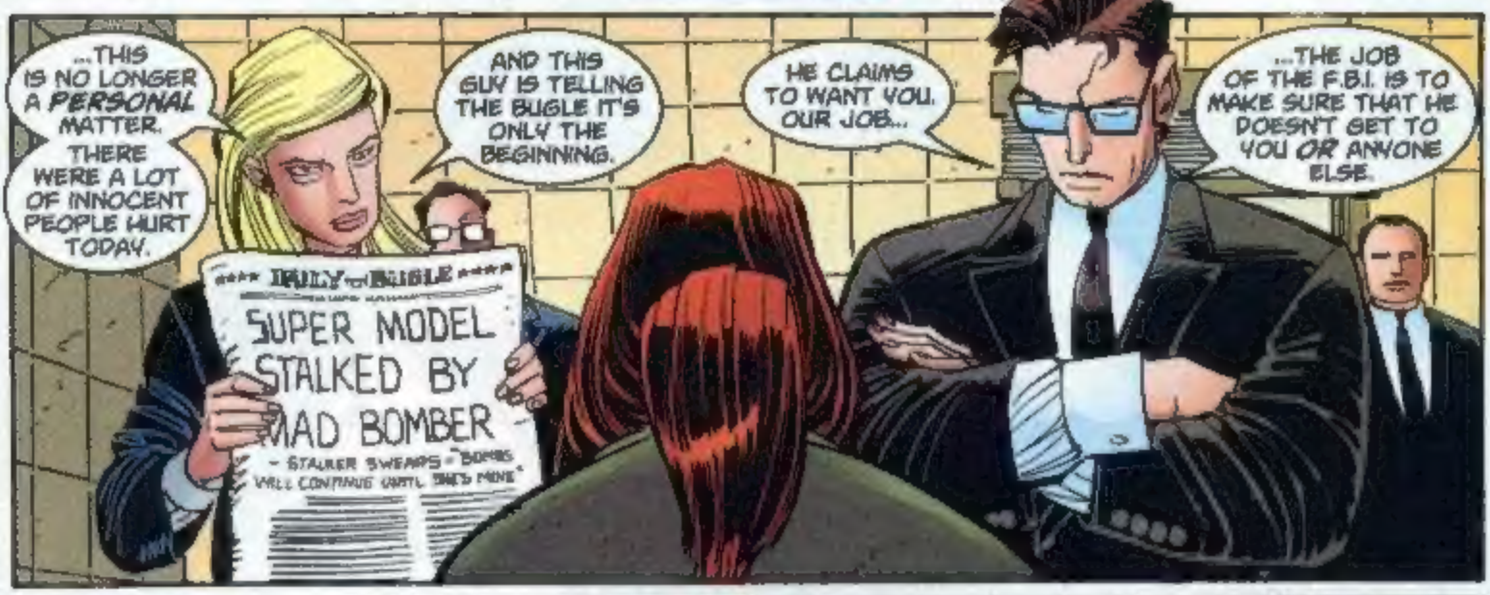
Ms. PARKER, THERE'S BEEN AN EXPLOSION IN THE BASEMENT OF THE BUILDING.
WE NEED TO GET YOU TO A SAFE LOCATION. NOW.
WHAT? HOW?
MY AGENT PAID FOR SO MANY OF YOU BODYGUARDS THAT I THOUGHT MY STALKER COULD NEVER GET THIS CLOSE TO ME!
THESE THINGS HAPPEN, Ms. PARKER. NOW PLEASE... LET'S MOVE!
BUT AUNT MAY-?
SHE SPENT THE NIGHT IN QUEENS... REMEMBER? PLEASE, Ms. PARKER!
ELSEWHERE...
Heh, Heh, Heh!
YES, IS THIS THE DAILY BUGLE CITY DESK?
I'D LIKE TO REPORT SOME BOMBINGS.
AND I THOUGHT YOU PEOPLE MIGHT LIKE TO KNOW WHY THEY'RE HAPPENING.
AND HOW THEY CAN ALL STOP.
SUBWAY
PARKER BOOS
NEWSSTAND
SHORT TIME LATER...
I WAS ALREADY OVER THIS WITH THE DETECTIVES, AGENT TAYLOR... I DON'T KNOW WHO COULD BE DOING THIS.
THAT'S SPECIAL AGENT TELLER, Ms. PARKER, AND I'M AFRAID YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TELL ME AND SPECIAL AGENT WILSON ALL OVER AGAIN.
THAT'S RIGHT MA'AM, AFTER TODAY'S


...THIS IS NO LONGER A PERSONAL MATTER.
THERE WERE A LOT OF INNOCENT PEOPLE HURT TODAY.
AND THIS GUY IS TELLING THE BUGLE IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING.
DAILY BUGLE
SUPER MODEL STALKED BY MAD BOMBER
- STALKER SWEARS "BOMBS WILL CONTINUE UNTIL SHE'S MINE"
HE CLAIMS TO WANT YOU. OUR JOB...
...THE JOB OF THE F.B.I. IS TO MAKE SURE THAT HE DOESN'T GET TO YOU OR ANYONE ELSE.

BUT IN ORDER TO DO THAT WE NEED YOUR COOPERATION.
WHERE DO YOU WANT ME TO START?
THE CRANK CALLS? THE THREATS? THE BOMBING? IT'S ALL THERE IN THE REPORT I GAVE THE DETECTIVES. WHAT MORE CAN I TELL YOU?
WHAT ABOUT SPIDER-MAN'S INVOLVEMENT IN ALL THIS?
WE UNDERSTAND THERE WAS AN INCIDENT WITH HIM.

INCIDENT? HE SAVED MY LIFE WHEN THE BOMBINGS STARTED. TOOK ME TO SAFETY --

MIGHT THAT HAVE BEEN WHAT HE WANTED YOU TO BELIEVE. Ms. PARKER?

AND WHAT ABOUT YOUR HUSBAND... PETER PARKER, IS IT? WHERE IS HE THROUGH ALL THIS?

PETER? HE HAD SOME PERSONAL BUSINESS TO TAKE CARE OF TONIGHT.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS.

VENOM.
VENOM!
VENOM!
<ACK!?
I... THINK...
HE... WANTS...
TO... TALK...
TO YOU
<ACK!?
DOES
HE NOW?

ANOTHER RETURN OF THE SINISTER SIX

PART 2 OF 2

AND JUST WHAT WOULD SANDMAN AND HIS NEW WANT FROM US?

HOWARD MACKIE
JOHN ROMITA Jr.
SCOTT HANNA
story and art

I WANT YOU TO STAY OUT OF OUR WAY.

DOCTOR OCTOPUS AND SENATOR WARD ARE OUR PRIMARY TARGETS.

YOU WANT TO KILL SPIDER-MAN... DO IT!

BUT BE QUICK AND LEAVE.

WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO AND WE GOT NO INTEREST IN GETTIN' MIXED UP WITH THE LIKES OF YOU!

GREGORY WRIGHT & JOE ROSAS
colors

RICHARD STARKINGS & COMICRAFT'S LIZ AGRAPHIOTIS
letters

RALPH MACCHIO
editor

BOB HARRAS
chief

At a demonstration on Radiation, High school student PETER PARKER was bitten by an irradiated Spider from which he gained the Arachnid's incredible Abilities. When a burglar killed his beloved Uncle Ben, a grief-stricken Peter vowed to use his Great Powers in the service of his fellow man, because he learned an invaluable lesson: With Great Power must also come Great Responsibility. Stan Lee Presents SPIDER-MAN

SILENCE.

THIS MIST OF MYSTERIO'S HAS ALLOWED OCTOPUS TO SLIP AWAY WITH HARD, BUT...

...THEY WILL NOT RUN...

...FAR!

SWHHHHH

THIS IS CRAZY! I SHOULDN'T EVEN BE HERE! THE SINISTER SIX! VENOM!

LIKE I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH PROBLEMS IN MY PERSONAL LIFE RIGHT NOW!

AND I'M THINKING BREATHING IS RIGHT THERE ON THE TOP OF MY LIST!

WAIT! THERE'S SOMETHING MORE! IT'S A--

ARGH!

BOMB!?

FIRE!
MY SYMBIOTIC OTHER CANNOT STAND FIRE! I FEEL ITS PAIN!
YEAH, WELL... I'M NOT GOING TO LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER THAT ONE!

THAT SHOULD KEEP VENOM BUSY FOR A LITTLE WHILE. NOW TO SEE IF MY SAVIOR WAS...

...ARTHUR STACY! YOU, SIR, ARE A LIFE SAVER!
WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND, SPIDER-MAN! AND I STILL OWE YOU A FEW.
NOW DOC OCK TOOK OFF WITH SENATOR WARD. IF WE HURRY WE CAN CATCH THEM AND --

NO, ARTHUR. WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING. I'M NOT GOING TO HELP YOU KILL WARD! WHAT IS YOUR PROBLEM WITH HIM?
I'M SORRY. I CAN'T TELL YOU. AND I WON'T LET YOU STOP ME FROM DOING WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.

I'M SORRY, TOO, ARTHUR. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN AND I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU DO SOMETHING YOU'LL REGRET.
GO HOME, ARTHUR. YOUR DAUGHTER JILL IS A NERVOUS WRECK ABOUT YOU.
THWAP

AND GET OFF THIS ROOFTOP FAST! VENOM ISN'T GOING TO BE ANY TOO PLEASED THAT YOU GAVE ME A HAND IN GETTING AWAY.

WILL YOU LOOK AT THE BIG, BAD SUPER-VILLAIN...
...AFRAID OF A LITTLE FIRE! WHATTA SISSY!
LET ME GIVE YOU A HAND, TOUGH GUY!
AND TO THINK... I USETA HAVE NIGHTMARES ABOUT YOU!
DO NOT MOCK OUR PAIN!
I'VE GOT TO ADMIT IT IS A PRETTY SILLY WEAKNESS FOR AN ALLEGED SUPER-CRIMINAL TO HAVE.
AND IT IS ONE OF MY FEW WEAKNESSES...
...AS YOU ALL ARE GOING TO LEARN!
ACTUALLY, VENOM, ALL THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN IS THAT YOU AND YOUR CREEPY LIVING COSTUME ARE GOIN' TO LEARN A NEW DEFINITION 'O THE WORD PAIN!
THAT AND YOU'RE GOIN' TO SUCCEED IN EMBARRASSIN' YOURSELF IN FRONTA ALL THEM CIVILIANS DOWN THERE!
WE GOT NO PROBLEM WITH YOU. I DECIDED TO GET THE OL' GANG BACK TOGETHER TO TAKE DOWN OUR FORMER BOSS -- DOC OCK -- AND THAT ROTTEN POLITICIAN! HE'S HANGIN' OUT WITH -- STEWART WARD.*
* As seen in Amazing Spider-Man#12 -- Baker's Dozen Ref!

BUT IF YOU WANNA BE DIFFICULT... THE SINISTER SIX HAS GOT THE NUMBERS, THE EXPERIENCE AND THE POWER TO TAKE ON YOU AND A BOATLOAD'A SYMBIOTES!

WHEN YOU FACE US SANDMAN, YOU ARE OUT OF YOUR DEPTH.
FIRST WE'LL DEFEAT YOU, THEN SUCK YOUR SANDY BRAIN THROUGH YOUR SKULL.

ENOUGH!!
THANK YOU, ELECTRO.
NOW, SANDMAN, I BELIEVE WE HAD A JOB TO PERFORM?
DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD BE GETTING TO IT?
KRAKOOM
Er...YEAH... YEAH WE SHOULD!
WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU'RE HERE, Mr. MYSTERIO.
...WORD AROUND TOWN WAS THAT YOU HAD KILLED YOURSELF!
See the new Classic DAREDEVIL #7 -- Classic Ralf.

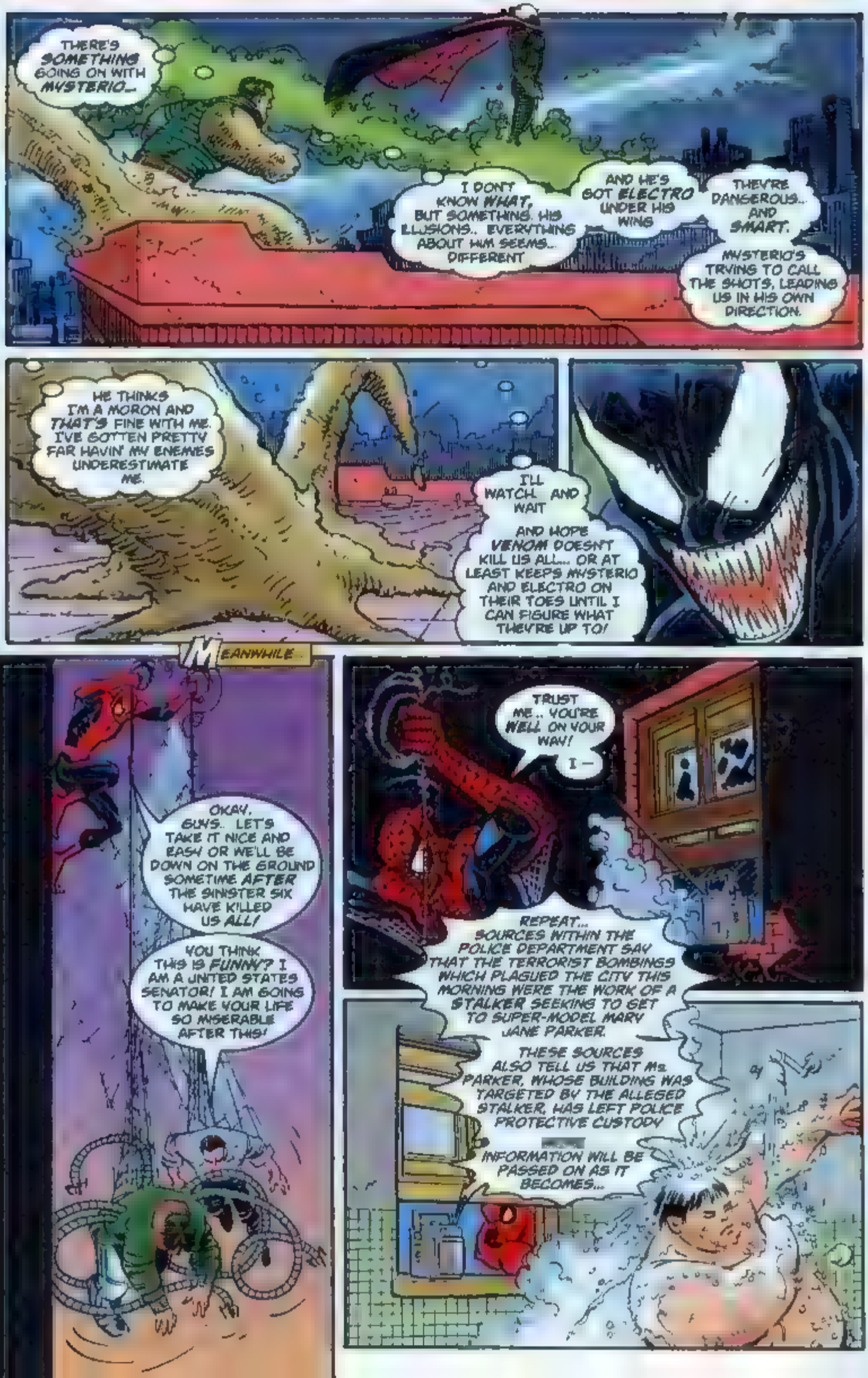
YES... MY RECENT LIFE WOULD APPEAR TO BE A PUZZLE.
BUT, FOR NOW, MY IDENTITY... MY LIFE... MY DEATH... ARE ALL UP FOR SPECULATION... AND WILL REMAIN SO. IT MAKES ME HAPPY.
THE ONLY THING WE KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN CONTRACTED TO ELIMINATE SENATOR STEWART WARD AND OTTO OCTAVIUS.
YOU, VENOM, HAVE A FEW OPTIONS. JOIN US IN OUR ENDEAVOR...
...OR DISAPPEAR!
YOU'RE ASKING US TO JOIN YOU?
HEY! FISH BOWL HEAD! WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?
I PULLED THIS OUTFIT TOGETHER. I'M CALLING THE SHOTS.
OF COURSE YOU ARE, SANDMAN. I WASN'T STEPPING ON TOES. I WAS ONLY TRYING TO AID YOU IN ACHIEVING OUR FINAL GOAL.
YEAH, WELL... IF YOU WANT TO HELP US, VENOM, FINE! BUT YOU GET PAID OUT OF MYSTERIO'S CUT! AND STAY OUT OF MY WAY!
OF COURSE WE WILL! JUST ONE THING... THE REST OF YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DO WITH OCTOPUS AND WARD, BUT...
...SPIDER-MAN IS MINE!
MY SPEAR FOUND ITS MARK. OCTOPUS IS BLEEDING. THE TIP WAS DRUGGED.
HE AND WARD WILL NOT GET FAR.

AT THAT MOMENT...
I'M AFRAID, Ms. PARKER, YOU ARE GOING TO HAVE TO REMAIN HERE TONIGHT
EXCUSE ME? ABSOLUTELY NOT. I'VE GOT —
THIS IS NOT SUBJECT TO DISCUSSION, Ms. PARKER. THIS IS THE SAFEST PLACE FOR YOU RIGHT NOW AND —
BOOM
BOOM
BOOM
WHAT THE—?
HOW COULD HE HAVE KNOWN WHERE WE WERE GUARDING HER?
HOW COULD HE HAVE KNOWN?
SHE'S MINE!
TELLER! SHE'S GONE!
"WHAT?
"GET HER BACK HERE -- NOW!"
TAXI!
THEY CAN'T PROTECT ME. NOT FROM HIM.
PETER IS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD PROTECT ME — AND I CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT RIGHT NOW NOT AGAIN.

WHERE TO, LADY?
WHEREVER... JUST DRIVE
SURE THING. IT'S YOUR MONEY
HEY, WANT A LOLLIPOP?
ELSEWHERE...
STOP YOUR INFERNAL SQUIRMING, WARD!
THIS IS NOT AS SIMPLE AS IT APPEARS!
THEN PUT ME DOWN, OCTOPUS NOW!
YOU WANT TO BE DOWN, SENATOR ?
VERY... WELL
OCTOPUS!
WHAT ARE YOU --?!
WE'RE FALLING!
THWP
HAVING A PROBLEM, OCK?

EVER THE HERO TO FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE, SPIDER-MAN?
THWAP
AND, WHILE I DO APPRECIATE YOUR HELPING THE SENATOR AND ME TO ESCAPE, I AM AFRAID IT WILL ALL BE FOR NAUGHT
IT APPEARS THAT THE TOXIN ON KRAVEN'S LITTLE DART SEEMS TO HAVE TAKEN ITS TOLL ON ME... SANDMAN AND THE OTHERS WILL BE UPON US SHORTLY AND --
WHAT IS GOING ON HERE, OCK? WHY DOES EVERYONE WANT WARD DEAD? WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING HIM FROM YOUR OWN GANG?
MY OWN GANG?
HOW PEDESTRIAN YOU MAKE IT SOUND DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT SIX SUCH POWERFUL AND CRIMINALLY LIKE-MINDED INDIVIDUALS COULD EVER BE A GANG?
WE WERE NEVER THE AVENGERS! WE WERE NEVER A TEAM.
I WAS ONLY ABLE TO LOOSELY HOLD THEM TOGETHER FOR BRIEF PERIODS OF TIME DUE TO MY SUPREME INTELLECT I SINCERELY DOUBT THAT A BUMBLING NEANDERTHAL SUCH AS THE SANDMAN WILL BE AS SUCCESSFUL!
THE SENATOR IS MY BUSINESS, BUT AND I GIVE YOU MY WORD ON THIS... YOU DO NOT WANT HIM FALLING INTO THE HANDS OF THE SINISTER SIX NOR THOSE FOR WHOM THEY WORK
WHAT ABOUT WARD?
THWAP
WHO DO THEY WORK FOR?
IF WE WAIT HERE LONG ENOUGH YOU CAN ASK THEM YOURSELF

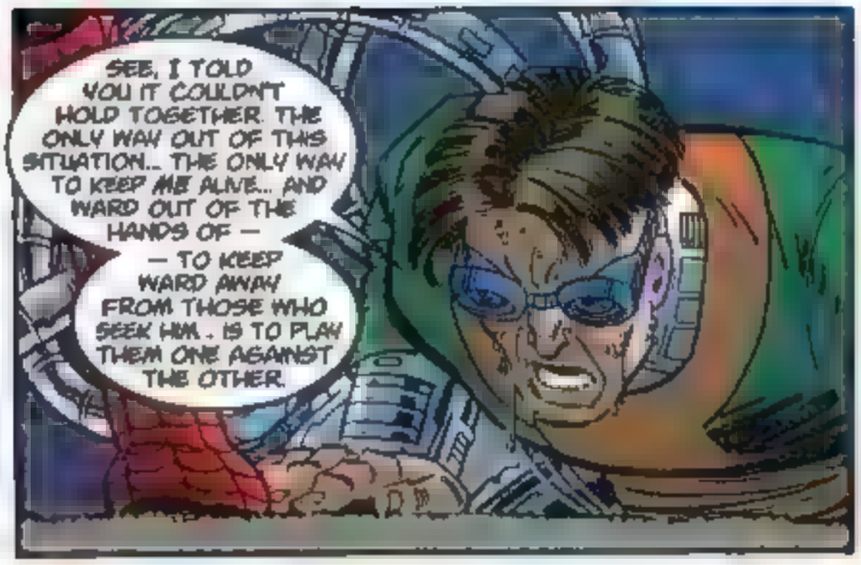
NEARBY.
KRAVEN. THE LAST OF A NOBLE LINE
HE'S A HUNTER, PURE AND SIMPLE, AND AT HIS BEST WHEN RUNNIN' HIS PREY TO GROUND
HE'S THE MAN I WANT ON POINT
AND WITH THE VULTURE SCOUTING FROM THE AIR... WE'LL CATCH UP WITH OCK AND WARD SOON ENOUGH.
THE VULTURE... [redacted] UNDERESTIMATES THE OLD BIRD
THEY SEE JUST A TIRED AND WORN-OUT OLD GUY WITH A HOOK NOSE ... THE WEAKEST ONE OF US ALL.
NOT ME. I RESPECT THE GEEZER AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY... I'M A LITTLE SCARED OF HIM. HE MAY BE THE MOST VICIOUS ONE OF THE BUNCH. THE LAST ONE TO TURN YOUR BACK ON.
HE KNOWS HOW I FEEL... AND WE GET ALONG JUST FINE
BUT KRAVEN AND THE VULTURE ARE THE ONLY TWO THAT I TRUST IN THIS NEW SINISTER SIX.
KRAVEN HAS HIS OWN CODE OF HONOR AND THE VULTURE... I THINK WE HAVE AN [redacted]
SO I'VE GOT TWO TO WATCH MY BACK
THE OTHERS.


THERE'S SOMETHING GOING ON WITH MYSTERIO...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT, BUT SOMETHING. HIS ILLUSIONS.. EVERYTHING ABOUT HIM SEEMS.. DIFFERENT
AND HE'S GOT ELECTRO UNDER HIS WING
THEY'RE DANGEROUS... AND SMART.
MYSTERIO'S TRYING TO CALL THE SHOTS, LEADING US IN HIS OWN DIRECTION.
HE THINKS I'M A MORON AND THAT'S FINE WITH ME. I'VE GOTTEN PRETTY FAR HAVIN' MY ENEMIES UNDERESTIMATE ME.
I'LL WATCH AND WAIT
AND HOPE VENOM DOESN'T KILL US ALL... OR AT LEAST KEEPS MYSTERIO AND ELECTRO ON THEIR TOES UNTIL I CAN FIGURE WHAT THEY'RE UP TO!
MEANWHILE...
OKAY, GUYS.. LET'S TAKE IT NICE AND EASY OR WE'LL BE DOWN ON THE GROUND SOMETIME AFTER THE SINISTER SIX HAVE KILLED US ALL!
YOU THINK THIS IS FUNNY? I AM A UNITED STATES SENATOR! I AM GOING TO MAKE YOUR LIFE SO MISERABLE AFTER THIS!
TRUST ME.. YOU'RE WELL ON YOUR WAY!
I—
REPEAT... SOURCES WITHIN THE POLICE DEPARTMENT SAY THAT THE TERRORIST BOMBINGS WHICH PLAGUED THE CITY THIS MORNING WERE THE WORK OF A STALKER SEEKING TO GET TO SUPER-MODEL MARY JANE PARKER.
THESE SOURCES ALSO TELL US THAT Ms. PARKER, WHOSE BUILDING WAS TARGETED BY THE ALLEGED STALKER, HAS LEFT POLICE PROTECTIVE CUSTODY
INFORMATION WILL BE PASSED ON AS IT BECOMES...

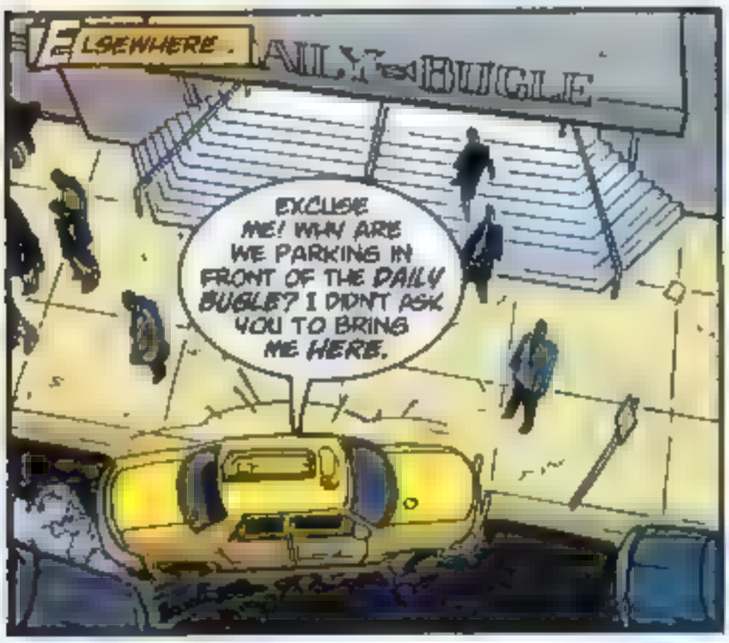
...AVAILABLE.
GOT TO GET TO MARY JANE! GOT TO FIND HER BEFORE —!
BUT, IF I LEAVE OCK AND WARD BEHIND... THE SINISTER SIX WILL FIND 'EM. BUT THEY'RE MY ENEMIES... DANGEROUS... STILL, I'D BE NO BETTER THAN THEM IF I JUST LEFT!
I HATE THIS!
THIS IS RIDICULOUS! I'VE HAD ENOUGH! YOU FIGHT SANDMAN AND THE REST, IF YOU WANT...
...I'M LEAVING!
WE HAD A DEAL, WARD!
DEAL? DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY DEALS I'VE MADE AND BROKEN THIS WEEK ALONE?
BESIDES... YOUR PART OF THE DEAL WAS TO KEEP ME ALIVE! YOU DON'T SEEM TO BE DOING TOO GOOD OF A JOB RIGHT NOW! AND I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY EVERYONE WANTS ME! I'VE DONE —
SURE YOU DO, STEWART...

...YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN WHY YOU COULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO LIVE. I'M JUST SORRY THAT IT TOOK THIS LONG AND THAT... IT HAD TO BE ME PULLING THE TRIGGER.
COME ON, ARTHUR! WE WERE FRIENDS!
YES... WE WERE.
ARTHUR! DON'T DO IT!
THIS IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN, SPIDER-MAN.
JUST WALK AWAY... TURN YOUR BACK... OR TAKE ME TO THE POLICE WHEN IT'S OVER. BUT HE IS GOING TO DIE.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S DONE. OR WHAT HE IS CAPABLE OF DOING! THE DANGER!
NO MATTER WHAT IT IS... HE'S NOT WORTH IT. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, LIKE YOUR BROTHER GEORGE WAS.
GEORGE... HE KNEW ABOUT WARD.. HE'D UNDERSTAND WHY I HAVE TO DO THIS —
NO!
WHAT IS GOING ON?! ARTHUR! I KNOW YOU AND I'VE HAD OUR PROBLEMS IN THE PAST... WHEN WE WORKED FOR THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THIS... WHY DO YOU WANT ME DEAD?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

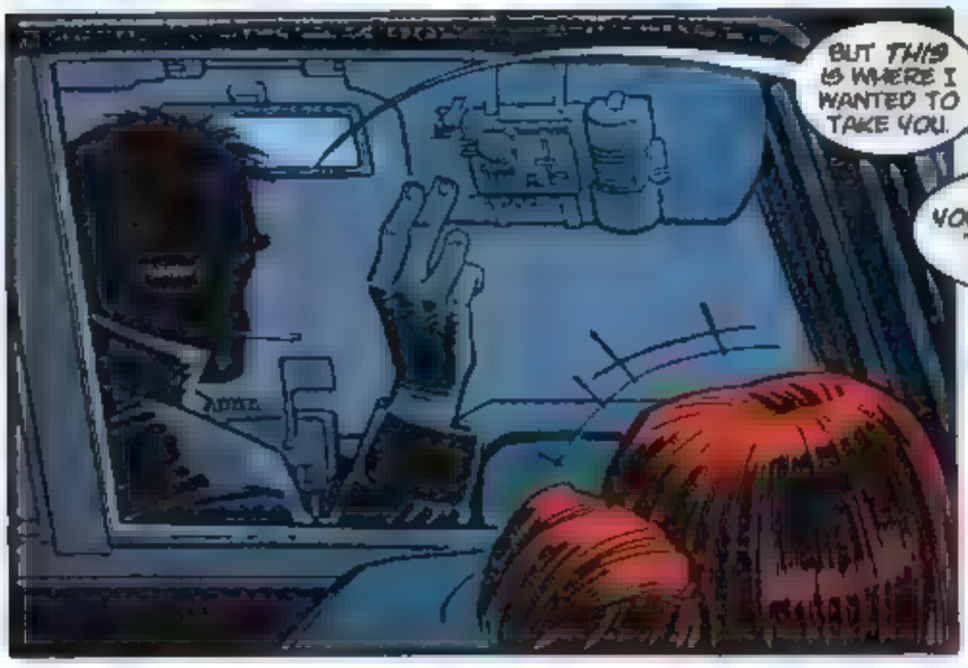
YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER... DO YOU?
REMEMBER WHAT? PLEASE... TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON!
OOPS! SORRY, BUT...
...NO TIME FOR LONGWINDED SPEECHES!
WARD IS OURS OCK DIES HERE, SPIDER-MAN...
...AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED... YOU CAN SWING OUT OF HERE WITH THE OLD GUY!
NO! YOU SAID HE --
FWAM
I LIED!
GET USED TO IT! I'M THE BOSS.
YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO FIT IN WITH THIS LITTLE GROUP ANYWAY, VENOM!
BESIDES... I THINK I LIKE THAT WEB-HEADED WEASEL BETTER THAN YOU! THEM TEETH A YOURS GIVE ME THE CREEPS!


SEE, I TOLD YOU IT COULDN'T HOLD TOGETHER. THE ONLY WAY OUT OF THIS SITUATION... THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP ME ALIVE... AND WARD OUT OF THE HANDS OF —
— TO KEEP WARD AWAY FROM THOSE WHO SEEK HIM. IS TO PLAY THEM ONE AGAINST THE OTHER.

I HAVE NO TIME FOR THIS.
MJ NEEDS ME...
...AND THIS IS JUST BAD GUYS VERSUS BAD GUYS.
BUT OCK ISN'T TELLING ME SOMETHING ABOUT WARD SOMETHING BIG.
AND THAT'S GOTTA HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH WHY ARTHUR STACY WANTS WARD DEAD
WHAT DO I DO?


ELSEWHERE . . .
DAILY BUGLE
EXCUSE ME! WHY ARE WE PARKING IN FRONT OF THE DAILY BUGLE? I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO BRING ME HERE.

AND WHY WON'T THIS DOOR OPEN? THIS IS NOT WHERE I WANTED TO GO!


BUT THIS IS WHERE I WANTED TO TAKE YOU.
THIS IS WHERE I WANT TO PROVE MY LOVE TO YOU AND TO THE WORLD!
YOU! YOU'RE THE — THAT'S A BOMB!

YES IT IS.
NOW ARE YOU SURE I CAN'T OFFER YOU A LOLLIPOP?

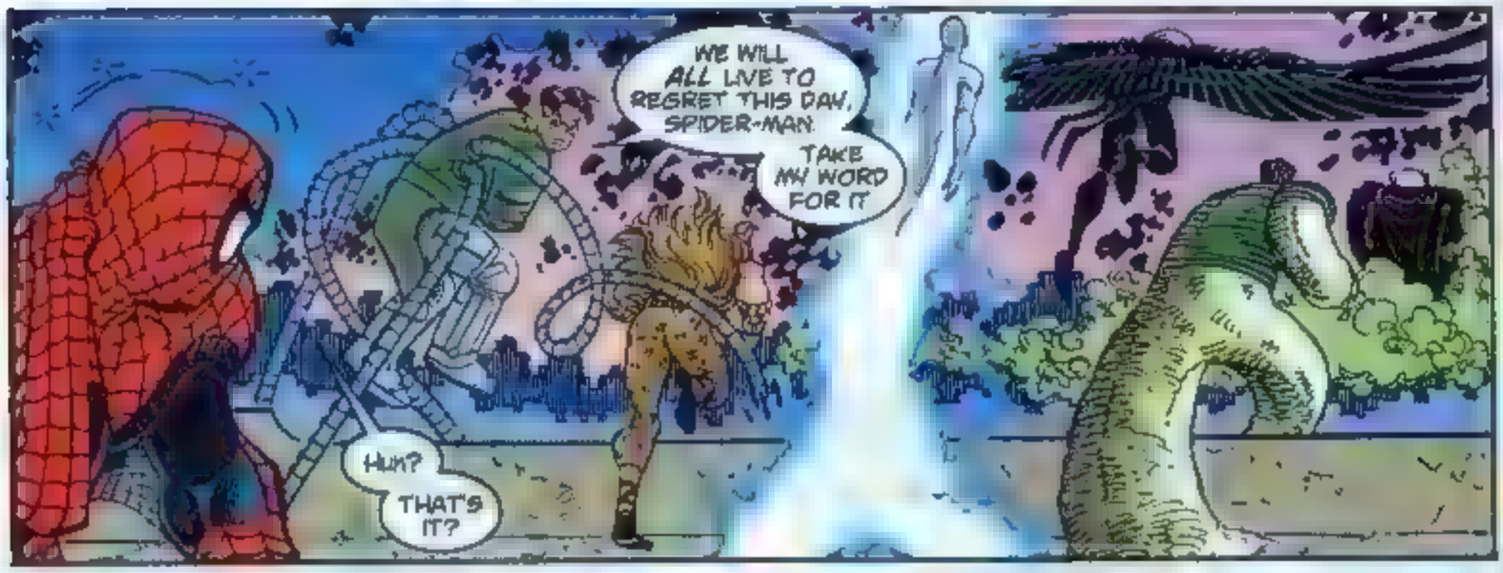
MEANWHILE, SPIDER-MAN HAS HIS OWN HANDS QUITE FULL...
I DON'T NEED THIS! NOT NOW!
BUT I'VE GOT TO TRUST THAT MJ IS GOING TO BE OKAY WITHOUT ME.
AND, EVEN IF I WAS WILLING TO LET OCTOPUS AND WARD TWIST IN THE WIND...
I CAN'T LEAVE ARTHUR HERE TO FACE THE SINISTER SIX.
JUST GOTTA TRY AND MAKE IT FAST --
AND HOPE THAT WHAT VENOM DOES CAUSES ENOUGH OF A DISTRACTION TO ALLOW ME TO SNEAK EVERYONE OUT OF HERE UNHARMED
SURE SHOULD BE SIMPLE! TOTAL PEACE.
SAVE ONE OF YOUR MOST HATED ENEMIES...
...AND A UNITED STATES SENATOR.
FROM SIX OF THE MOST DEADLY FOES YOU'VE EVER FACED
AND WRAP IT UP IN TIME TO SCOUR THE CITY, FIND YOUR WIFE, BEFORE HER MAD BOMBER STALKER DOES--
...FIX YOUR MARRIAGE.
SEE IF YOU'LL HAVE A JOB.
AND TRY TO DO IT ALL WITHOUT GETTING KILLED!
NOW... DYING IS BAD WHY?
DON'T HAVE TIME TO PONDER THE IMPONDERABLES

OCTOPUS! THEY'RE GETTING PAST HIM!
YOU PROMISED THAT YOU... THAT... YOU'D...
I'M FEELING STRANGE. HOT... I... WHAT'S HAPPENING?
NO! NOT NOW! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!
WHAT? WHAT... IS...
SKIZZAKE
...HAPPENING...
...TO...
...ME!

SPIDER-MAN
STOP HIM!
STOP HIM NOW, OR... ...WE ARE ALL DEAD!
EXCUSE ME?
DID I MISS SOMETHING?
THE U.S SENATOR IS. WHAT? SOME SORT OF ALIEN? ARTHUR... MAYBE NOW WOULD BE A GOOD TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS?
NO. IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW
MORE PUZZLES!
YOU AND I ARE GOING TO HAVE TO HAVE A SERIOUS TALK, SIR.
BUT NOT RIGHT NOW
RIGHT NOW I...

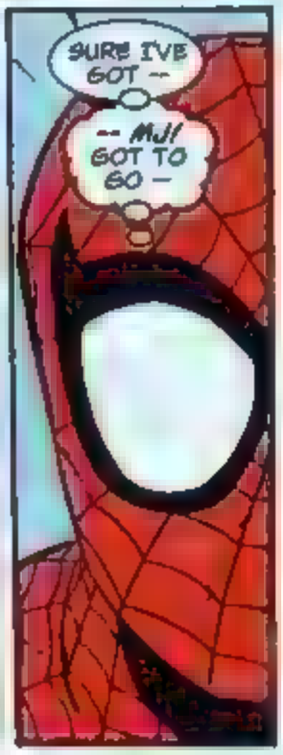
...HAVE TO JUMP INTO SOME SORT OF WEIRD ENERGY THING AND TRY TO RESCUE SIX OF MY ENEMIES...
...ALL OF WHOM WOULD JUST AS SOON SEE ME DEAD... FROM A UNITED STATES SENATOR!?
Oh... THAT MAKES SENSE!
WA-ROOM!

WARD? THAT WAS WARD?
ELECTRO.. NOW!
YES, MYSTERIO...
...IT WILL BE DONE!
WHAT
...IS...
...HAPP --
- I REMEMBER
FRZZZAA
AWOOM

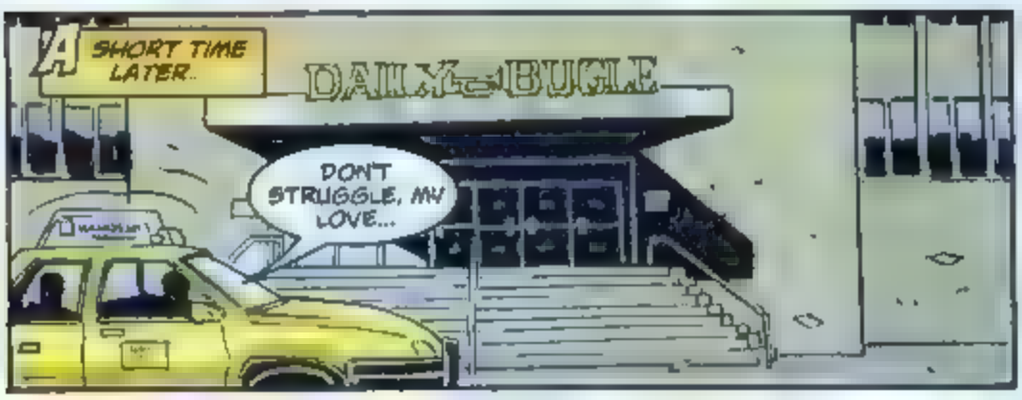

WE WILL ALL LIVE TO REGRET THIS DAY, SPIDER-MAN.
TAKE MY WORD FOR IT
HUH?
THAT'S IT?

WARD DISAPPEARS AND THE SINISTER SIX ALL SLINK OFF TO NURSE THEIR WOUNDS?
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THEIR ENCOUNTER WITH WARD TOOK OUT OF THEM, SPIDER-MAN.

BUT YOU DO?
UNFORTUNATELY... YES AND IT'S BETTER THAT YOU NOT KNOW
NOT IF YOU EVER WANT TO SLEEP [redacted].
GO TO YOUR LIFE, YOUNG FELLA. YOU DO HAVE ONE, DON'T YOU?


SURE I'VE GOT --
-- MJ! GOT TO GO --

ANOTHER DAY... SPIDER-MAN ANOTHER TIME TO EAT YOUR BRAINS! YUM!


A SHORT TIME LATER...
DAILY BUGLE
DON'T STRUGGLE, MY LOVE...

POLI

...IT WILL ALL BE OVER VERY SHORTLY! YOU AND I WERE DESTINED TO BE TOGETHER, FOR ETERNITY!
NO!
KRAK!
COME BACK! YOU ARE MINE!
CLEAR THE AREA! HE'S GOT A — — BOMB!
FRAKOOM!

MARY JANE. I TRIED TO GET HERE SOONER, BUT --
DON'T
PLEASE.
JUST DON'T
I.
A SHORT TIME LATER...
WE DID IT, ELECTRO
BUT WHAT DID WE DO?
SOON YOU, AND THE WORLD, WILL FIND OUT VERY SOON.
END

Each Day A Grain of Sand Through Life's Hourglass
THE TIME: A SCANT FEW MONTHS AGO.
THE PLACE THE SYMKARIAN EMBASSY IN NEW YORK CITY, STAGING BASE FOR THE TEAM OF INTERNATIONAL MERCENARIES KNOWN AS THE WILD PACK.
EVENING, MISTER SANDMAN
EVENIN' MORTY AN' CALL ME BAKER Mr BAKER
GOING OUT, ARE YOU? THOUGHT FOR SURE YOUD BE STICKING AROUND FOR THE BIG SOIREE IN HONOR OF THE WAKANDAN AMBASSADOR
Nah. THAT SORTA RITZY SHINDIG AIN'T REALLY MY SPEED, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
TOM BREVOORT WRITER GEOF ISHERWOOD PENCILER ROD RAMOS INKER
JOHN KALISZ COLORS RS/COMICRAFT/LA LETTERS RALPH MACCHIO EDITOR BOB HARRAS CHIEF

FIGURED I'D HEAD OUT TO MY APARTMENT FOR THE WEEKEND, TAKE CARE OF A COUPLE THINGS I'D LEFT LYING.
SEE YA 'ROUND

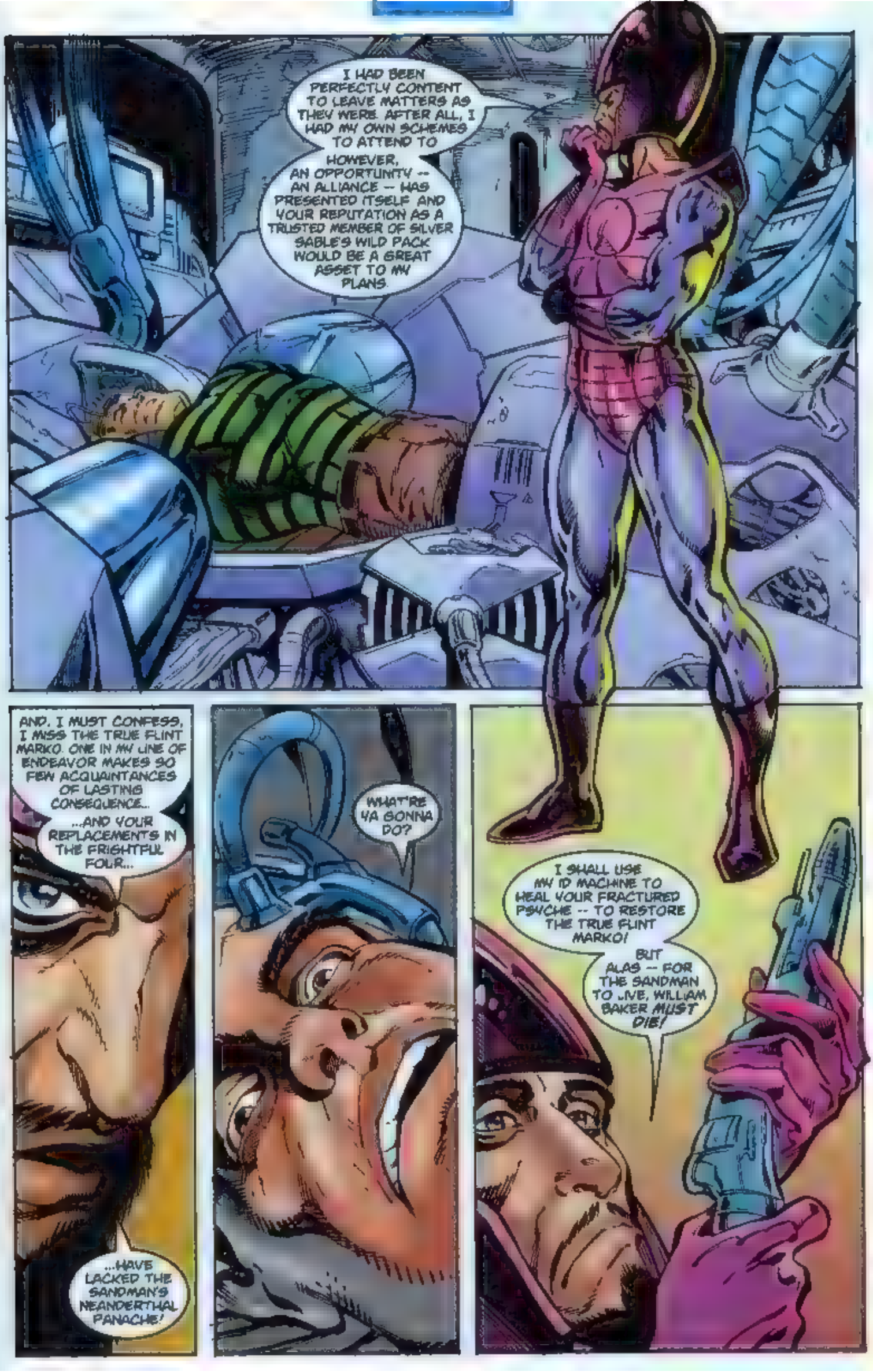
AW, NUTS

FIGURES! AN' I WAS IN THE MOOD FOR A WALK, TOO!
TAXI! HEY, CAB!
WHERE TO -- SAY, AREN'T YOU --?
THAT'S RIGHT, PAL I'M THE SANDMAN! TOUGHEST MOOK TO EVER EARN HISSELF A PRESIDENTIAL PARDON!
BUT I'M GONNA WIND UP THE MUDMAN IF I GOTTA STAND AROUND HERE MUCH LONGER!
SO HOWS- ABOUT WE CONTINUE THIS THRILLING LITTLE TETE-A-TETE ON THE WAY TO THE LOWER EAST SIDE?
NO NEED TO TROUBLE YOURSELF FURTHER, DRIVER
PSASSI!
ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY ASSOCIATE'S TRANSPORT HAVE ALREADY BEEN MADE.
SLEEEEE
HE'LL BE FLYING... ON THE WINGLESS WINDS OF MORPHEUS...

AWAKEN, SANDMAN!
HUH? WHAT?
YOU -- THE WIZARD!
INDUBITABLY
DON'T BOTHER TRYING TO SIT UP, MY FRIEND. IT WAS CHILD'S PLAY FOR ONE OF MY INTELLECT TO DEVISE A "GENETIC STRAIT-JACKET" THAT WILL PREVENT YOUR SANDY FORM FROM ALTERING ITS SHAPE IN ANY WAY FOR SOME HOURS TO COME.
REGRETTABLY, IT WILL ALSO MAKE SPEECH ON YOUR PART RATHER DIFFICULT AS WELL.
WHAT'RE YOU AFTER?
WHY, I'M HERE TO HELP YOU, OF COURSE
SURELY YOU RECOGNIZE MY ID MACHINE -- THE VERY DEVICE WE ONCE USED TO CHANGE THE PERSONALITY OF THE BESTIAL THING --
-- TO TURN HIM AGAINST HIS PARTNERS IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR! *
BUT TODAY, I DIRECT IT TO A MORE ALTRUISTIC END...
...THE SALVATION OF FLINT MARKO!
WHUZZAT?
* In FANTASTIC FOUR #41-43 -- TurneOut Rail!

HE BURST DRAMATICALLY ONTO THE SCENE, ASCENDING QUICKLY TO THE PINNACLE OF THE CRIMINAL AUTHORITIES' MOST-WANTED LISTS.
YOU REMEMBER FLINT MARKO, DON'T YOU, SANDMAN?
I MOST CERTAINLY DO
AND WHEN A FLUKE OF SC[illegible] HIS ATOMIC STRUCTURE INTO [illegible] LIVING, AMBULATORY SAND...
HE TURNED HIS NEWFOUND POWER TOWARDS EVEN GREATER ACTS OF CRIME AND LARCENY!
I FOUND IN HIM A POWERFUL, DANGEROUS ALLY AS A MEMBER OF MY FRIGHTFUL FOUR!
I COULD NEVER ADMIRE HIS THUGGISH INTELLECT... BUT I COULD -- AND DID -- FIND MERIT IN HIS TENACITY CUNNING, AND BRUTAL KILLER INSTINCT.
HE WOULD BE PROFOUNDLY EMBARRASSED BY THE MAN [illegible]

Ah, BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY YOUR FAULT, IS IT, BAKER?
I HEARD THE TALE THROUGH THE UNDERWORLD GRAPEVINE. HOW A SKIRMISH BETWEEN YOU AND THE LIQUIDIC HYDRO-MAN --
-- RESULTED IN YOUR BEING COMBINED INTO A SINGLE, HORRIFIC, MINDLESS ENTITY * I IMAGINE IT WAS QUITE TRAUMATIC...
...SO MUCH SO THAT YOUR BRUISED, BATTERED EGO SOUGHT SHELTER FROM THE PAIN!
MY ANGER, MY [illegible]TRED, USED TO SUSTAIN ME -- AND [illegible] ME GOING --
-- BUT I'M OVER THAT NOW! I JUST FEEL DRAINED, SPENT.. AND SO BLASTED WEARY!
IT CREATED THE RIDICULOUS PERSONA OF WILLIAM BAKER, WHICH SOUGHT TO MAKE UP FOR YOUR LIFE BEYOND THE LAW...
...BY JOINING THE EMPLOY OF SILVER SABLE -- AND EVEN BECOMING A RESERVE AVENGER! LUDICROUS!
* In AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #217-218 -- Mindless Ralf


I HAD BEEN PERFECTLY CONTENT TO LEAVE MATTERS AS THEY WERE. AFTER ALL, I HAD MY OWN SCHEMES TO ATTEND TO
HOWEVER, AN OPPORTUNITY -- AN ALLIANCE -- HAS PRESENTED ITSELF AND YOUR REPUTATION AS A TRUSTED MEMBER OF SILVER SABLE'S WILD PACK WOULD BE A GREAT ASSET TO MY PLANS.
AND, I MUST CONFESS, I MISS THE TRUE FLINT MARKO. ONE IN MY LINE OF ENDEAVOR MAKES SO FEW ACQUAINTANCES OF LASTING CONSEQUENCE...
...AND YOUR REPLACEMENTS IN THE FRIGHTFUL FOUR...
...HAVE LACKED THE SANDMAN'S NEANDERTHAL PANACHE!
WHAT'RE YA GONNA DO?
I SHALL USE MY ID MACHINE TO HEAL YOUR FRACTURED PSYCHE -- TO RESTORE THE TRUE FLINT MARKO!
BUT ALAS -- FOR THE SANDMAN TO LIVE, WILLIAM BAKER MUST DIE!

THIS WILL LIKELY NOT BE PLEASANT.
BUT THE MARKO I KNOW WOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE ENDURING THE PAIN/ HE WAS AMONG THE TOUGHEST MEN I KNEW.
WIZARD -- DON'T DO THIS!
NNGH!
TRUST ME, SANDMAN! IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD...
...AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, FOR MINE!
TURN IT OFF, WIZARD! TURN IT OFF! I'M'NA KILL YOU FOR THIS...
...I'LL KILL YOU...

WIZAARD!

MAGNIFICENT!
YOU FORCIBLY OVERRODE THE LOCK I'D PLACED ON YOUR GENETIC STRUCTURE!
GLAD YOU APPROVE, PINHEAD...

...'CAUSE I AIN'T BEGUN TA SHOW YOU WHAT THE SANDMAN'S CAPABLE OF!
YOU THINK I AIN'T ON TO YOU? YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE AFTER?
FLINT MARKO AIN'T GONNA BE YOUR PATSY ANYMORE, WIZARD! I DON'T NEED YOU TO BE AN OPERATOR — DON'T NEED ANYBODY!
NEXT TIME I LAY EYES ON YOUR FACE, I'M TAKIN' YOUR LIFE! AN' YOU'LL NEVER SEE IT COMING!
SO HERE'S A LITTLE ADVICE FROM YOUR "OLD PAL", THE SANDMAN...
...BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU STEP!
WELCOME BACK... FLINT!

EMBASSY'S AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TA HOLE UP, 'TIL I FIGURE MY NEXT MOVE...
WHY... Mr. BAKER!
I DIDN'T EXPECT TO SEE YOU BACK SO SOON!
I HAD...
...I HAD A CHANGE OF MIND. AND DON'T CALL ME BAKER!
I'M... THE SANDMAN!
END